

## **We Need To Forget** by [orphan\\_account](#)

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** F/M, M/M, Polyamory, Post-Canon, Slow Burn

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Karen Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Steve Harrington, Jonathan Byers/Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler

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**Summary:**

There's no better way to forget about a traumatic event than to throw yourself into something new. However, this isn't exactly what these Hawkins teens had been thinking of at first.

Rated M for future chapters.

# 1. Chapter 1

Only a few months had passed since what the Byers family were calling ‘the incident’. The upside down was still raw. It was still scratching at their skin, threatening to come loose and overturn their lives all over again. When the electricity failed and the lights flickered, their blood froze and hearts stopped. When Jonathan cut himself while making breakfast he almost ran to his room to grab the bat that was still propped up against his wall. And every time any of them walked down the hallway, they made sure they stepped over the burnt patch of carpet.

After the sun set and it was time for Will to go home, Jonathan was waiting with his car outside the Wheeler’s house. Shoulders hunched over, partly to help keep warm but mainly out of habit, he knocked on the front door and waited for someone to answer. ‘Please don’t be Nancy’ he would beg in his mind, not wanting to see the girl who he had come to consider a somewhat friend over the course of that traumatising week. Something like that bonds people together, it creates a connection that can’t be broken.

Yet Jonathan couldn’t stop himself from remembering the time when they wouldn’t even speak to words to one another. The time when Nancy wouldn’t even see him as his hunched over body weaved through the crowds in the corridors at school. And once that compulsory hell opened back up for the new year, Jonathan knew that everything would go back to how it was. How couldn’t it?

Who would want to hang out with the brother of the miracle boy who came back from the dead? Jonathan and his family were even bigger outsiders now than they had been in the past. Sure there had been a few weeks when they were the talk of the town and everyone was kind and open towards them, but that didn’t last for long. After those few uncomfortably kind weeks, the rumours emerged. Rumours that they faked Will’s death for money, attention, handouts, everything.

Of course, Nancy knew the truth. She’d seen that thing that had taken Will and Barb, she’d even helped to destroy. But sometimes knowing the truth wasn’t enough. Sometimes knowing the truth didn’t stop

people from throwing Jonathan under the bus for their own gain, and those thoughts were doing more than just itch the back of his mind. They were right up the front of his mind and yelling as loud as the crowds at the school's football games. Or at least as loud as he imagined those crowds to be. He'd never really participated in the school spirit thing. Not that anyone wanted him there anyway.

The opening of the front door and the sight of Karen Wheeler broke Jonathan out of his thoughts. "Uh, hello, Mrs Wheeler. I need to take Will home now." He needlessly stammered out. She knew why he was here, there was no other reason that he would ever be here. And both of them knew it.

But that didn't stop Karen from smiling softly and saying, "Of course, come in. I'll go and get them, you can wait in the living room with Nancy and Steve if you'd like." She offered as she stepped to the side, making room for Jonathan to step passed her.

The thought of waiting with not only Nancy, but Steve as well made his breath hitch in his throat. A cough and, "Thank you for the offer, but I can just go and grab Will."

"Nonsense, you sit and get warm. I'll go and get the boys." Arguing with a mother on a mission was a hopeless effort. Even Jonathan, with all of his social awkwardness, knew this. Wiping his feet on the doormat, he stepped into the house, warmth and the smell of a homey dinner surrounded him. With a point of her finger, Karen continued, "They're just in there. Go ahead."

Karen Wheeler had become kind and motherly towards both Will and Jonathan since the incident. Insisting that the town didn't know what they were talking about with those awful rumours. That even though she didn't know exactly what happened, she knew that no mother (especially not Joyce) would fake her own son's disappearance like that. She was probably the only person not directly involved in the whole thing who thought that way. Karen was a refreshing change, uncomfortably kind at times, but refreshing.

Taking a thumb nail into his mouth, Jonathan walked towards the room that Karen had pointed out to him. Standing in the doorway he stared at the scene before him. The pair were sitting on the couch

with Steve's arm around Nancy, his empty hand playing with her hair as they quietly spoke together. One look at them screamed that they were a couple that were growing more in love each day.

It was then that Jonathan remembered that him and Nancy weren't the only ones in his house that night. Steve had been there; he'd saved Jonathan's life. Nancy and Steve had connected that night in the same way that Jonathan and Nancy had connected. And their connection had helped their romantic relationship with one another stay afloat. It was clearly stronger than ever.

"Jonathan?" Nancy's soft, confused voice snapped Jonathan's eyes towards her directly. His thumb nail fell from the grip that his teeth had on it, the edge ripping off in the process. Tucking said thumb into the palm of his hand, he tried to hide his nervous shame. He shouldn't have been biting his nails, he shouldn't have been staring at them, he shouldn't have come into the house. He shouldn't have. He shouldn't have.

Jonathan mumbled out a, "Hi, Nancy." and shoved his hands deep into his jacket pockets. Lowering his gaze to his feet a redness threatened to coat his cheeks. Not because his life-long crush was acknowledging him, no he was almost proud to admit that he was used to that now. No, it was because it was clear that he didn't belong in this house. In the house that looked like it was in just as good condition as when it was bought. The house whose nuclear family looked like they had come straight out of the television. Jonathan and his old clothes, his nervous habits, and his infatuation didn't belong in a place that gave off the image of being perfect. His presence tarnished that supposed perfection, and all three of them knew it. Or at least, Jonathan did.

Steve, with his perfect hair and his own perfect house belonged here. Nancy and Steve were a perfect fit for one another. That, Jonathan was sure, they all knew. "Hi to you too." Steve said as he pulled Nancy closer to his side, "What are you doing here?" He asked.

Head still pointed down towards his feet, Jonathan's eyes moved up to stare at Steve, "I'm picking up my brother. Is that a problem?" The traumatic event connection hadn't managed to make its way between Steve and Jonathan. Of course Jonathan had his suspicions

that the expensive camera that Nancy had given him for Christmas had actually been from Steve, but there was no way for him to confirm those thoughts. And even if they were true, it couldn't erase the past that the pair shared.

Arms raising in surrender, Steve was no longer holding onto Nancy in any way for the first time since Jonathan had entered to room, "Hey, no, not at all." A laugh played on his voice. His arms only stayed raised for a few moments before they found their way back on Nancy, "I was just curious. Is that a crime?" One of his eyebrows raised as the question left his mouth.

Sighing, "It's not a crime," lowering his voice, he spoke under his breath, not letting the other two hear the next part of his statement, "but it did kill the cat." A somewhat rough poke on his back and Jonathan turned to see Will behind him.

"Let's go." Will's voice was almost as quiet as Jonathan's, minus the perpetual nerves that had found their way into Jonathan's voice long ago.

Putting his chewed hand on his brother's shoulder, "Great." He was about to turn and leave without another word, but then Jonathan remembered where he was. The perfect house with the seemingly perfect family. Social niceties were expected, "Bye Nancy," Nodding, he made sure to remember the other person in the room "Steve." No need to give Steve another reason to be even slightly annoyed with Jonathan.

Nancy was kind enough to leave Steve for a minute to close the door behind the Byers boys as they walked down to the beat up machine Jonathan called his car. Relieved that he had made it through the interaction without too much conflict left Jonathan feeling somewhat successful. Conflict was all he had faced for the passed few months. He couldn't wait to leave Hawkins far behind him after he graduated.

He'd be in New York, studying photography. He'd forget all about the incident and learn to sleep without fear of flickering lights at night. He'd forget all about his high school crush and find someone new, someone who wasn't dating someone who disliked him. And he'd only come home for holidays and birthdays where he would only see

his family and nobody else. He couldn't wait.

Starting up the car, he began the drive back to his home. The car drove down the road in silence for a few minutes, the brothers saying nothing to each other. The silence didn't last for too long though. "You were ready to leave pretty fast today. Is something wrong?" Jonathan asked his little brother.

He'd always cared for his brother, but it was needless to say that since the incident Jonathan had tried to keep a closer watch on his brother and his mental wellbeing. An experience like that was the sort of thing that would leave someone needing counselling. Hell, Jonathan knew that he needed counselling after it all, he couldn't imagine what Will would be needing. But it wasn't like they could actually get it. What were they meant to say? If they told the story of what actually happened they'd be locked up in a hospital. No doubt about it. They only had each other.

Will stared out of the passenger window into the darkness as he responded, "No, nothing. I was just ready to go."

Jonathan hated what he asked next. It made him sound like a parent, a father-figure, "Did you and your friends have a fight?" Although he hated sounding like a father, someone in their family had to be one at times. It's not like Lonnie was going to take up that role. Not that they needed Lonnie in their lives.

Letting out an exasperated sigh, Will threw his hands into the air, "I already told you nothing was wrong. I just want to go home." Leaning back in his seat, he scowled.

"Okay. I'll drop it." There wasn't anything that Jonathan could have said that would have left Will opening up. Since the incident he may have been his same old self on the outside, but when you looked closer it was clear that there were horrors hiding within him. And that was something that Jonathan didn't know how to help his brother with, no matter how much he tried.

Neither of them spoke for the rest of the car ride. Leaving Jonathan alone in his thoughts again. Thoughts that chose to float back to Nancy and Steve cuddling on the couch. Nancy looking like she was

the happiest she had been in ages and as if the harrowing events that occurred only a few months ago were nothing more than bad dreams. Steve, holding Nancy like he would do anything in the world to protect her from anything even remotely upsetting for the rest of their lives. Jonathan wanted something like that. Jonathan wanted someone to be completely comfortable with him, someone who could make him forget.

## 2. Chapter 2

School. It had never been a kind place to Jonathan, but after this particular winter break it was like walking into a building made of ice. Whispers behind his back and people moving out of his way down the corridor was nothing new, yet it still stung like a slap in the face. He pulled his bag closer to his chest as he kept his eyes glued to his feet. Walking at a speed that he liked to think would challenge some of the school's track and field athletes, Jonathan made a beeline for his first class. The sooner the day begun, the sooner it would be over.

He had considered not coming to school for a few weeks to let the whole thing die down, but if his few ventures out of the house over break had taught Jonathan anything it was that people weren't going to forget anytime soon. So, there he was, avoiding eye contact with everyone and trying to ignore everyone's comments. A few people had been kind enough to give him a pitying 'hello' or 'how are you?' but he chose to just ignore them. Jonathan had lasted this long without pity, he didn't need it now.

Sitting at the back of the classroom, no one could ignore the fact that Jonathan Byers had even bothered to show up. Loud exclamations from fellow students confirmed their thoughts as they waited for their teacher's arrival. Busying himself, Jonathan attempted to ignore them and their statements. However, each statement felt like ten stabs from a knife into his heart as they discredited the horror that he and so many others had gone through.

"What's he doing here?" Jonathan pulled out his notebook.

"Did you hear? They faked the whole thing." Jonathan started drawing scribbles down the side of a page.

"He should go back home and repent." Jonathan wished he were a ghost.

"If I were him, I'd drop out." Jonathan snapped his pencil.

"Will you idiots just shut up." Jonathan's eyes looked around the



room to find the voice that defended him. Stood at the front of the classroom, in front of the blackboard, was Steve Harrington. A bag was slung carelessly over his shoulder, his hair styled to perfection, and his hands were balled into fists like he was prepared to murder. “None of you know what happened, so just mind your own business.” He added as he made his way to the desk next to Jonathan’s.

The most surprising thing about the whole situation wasn’t that Steve was defending Jonathan — although that was rather surprising in and of itself — but rather that Steve had even bothered to show up to class. After years of skipping classes and accepting barely passing grades, Steve Harrington was the last person that Jonathan thought he would ever see sitting next to him in English class.

Pulling out a notebook that still had that new paper smell, “Don’t look so surprised, Byers.” Leaning across the gap, effectively shrinking the distance between the two, he asked, “Can I borrow a pencil?”

Searching for two new pencils — which were, unfortunately, the last two that he had — he let out a question without thinking it through, “What are you doing here?” Jonathan’s hand shook as he passed the pencil over, “I-I mean, you’re never in class so...” He trailed off, certain that everyone who was listening in could hear the shake in his voice. And everyone was listening in.

Not that Jonathan could blame them. Steve Harrington and Jonathan Byers were talking to each other after Steve had told people to stop bothering Jonathan. Only a few months ago Steve would have encouraged the comments or even possibly would have started them. If he had bothered to show up, that is. It was an opportunity that not many would pass up on witnessing and relaying to their friends later that day.

Laughing the somewhat insult off as if he were talking to one of his closest friends, Steve took the pencil and replied, “I have a scholarly girlfriend,” at the word ‘girlfriend’ Jonathan turned all of his attention deeply into his poorly made drawings, “I’ve got to at least try to keep up with her.” Steven continued.

The image of Steve sitting in his room late at night, studying for a

test or frantically writing an essay that was due the next day put a small smile on Jonathan's lips, "Good luck with that." He mumbled under his breath, still refusing to look Steve in the eye.

Jonathan stared at the page of his notebook, scribbling away until he heard those unmistakably tough high-heeled footsteps making their way across the school's cement floors. When Mrs Grant finally arrived and began the class Jonathan couldn't exactly say that he was paying attention. In fact, he couldn't say that he heard a single word that the teacher had said. But what he could say was that he knew for a fact that Mrs Grant stared at him for the entire class with a mix of pity and disgust. Turns out that teachers weren't exempt from the town gossip.

When her back was turned, writing in disgustingly perfect cursive on the blackboard, Jonathan felt a shift in the air. Steve was leaning entirely too far over in his chair, as he tempted fate to knock him over. With a whisper that certainly wasn't quiet enough for Mrs Grant not to hear, he spoke, "This so boring, Byers, let's ditch."

Turning his head and scrunching his face up in a manner that not-so-clearly said 'what the hell', Jonathan whispered back, "It's a bit late for that, but go ahead." The sound of chalk on board stopped and Jonathan snapped his head back to his drawings.

Either Steve didn't notice the absence of loud writing in the eerily quiet classroom, or he just didn't care, because he happily continued with his loud whispering, "Fine. Then next period you and me are going somewhere else, because this sucks."

Mrs Grant slammed her tiny piece of chalk down and spun on her heel, "Mr Harrington, if you have a problem with my class then you can discuss that with me privately after class." Her scowl made shivers run down Jonathan's spine and he couldn't even see it.

Steve sat back up in his chair, or as much as Steve's posture would allow him to. His slouching at this moment could have put Jonathan's to shame, "Oh, I couldn't take away your precious break time, Miss. I'll be fine. You can go back to your teaching." Picking up the pencil that Jonathan had let him borrow, he twirled it in his fingers.

“Maybe if you spent more time studying and less time learning how to spin a piece of wood around your fingers you’d get better grades.” With that comment, Steve lowered the pencil and slouched even lower in his seat as Mrs Grant went back to scraping out her cursive on the blackboard. Jonathan rested his head against his desk, facing away from Steve to hide the smile that was refusing to leave.

As it turned out, Steve Harrington may not have been as god-awful as he had been all throughout the last year. And maybe there was hope for that traumatic event connection between the two after all. Jonathan would just have to wait to see what happened next period before he came to a conclusion. But for the first time in a while he had hope that school wouldn't be entirely shitty.